

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips Friday, October 26, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
*Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-5
Juvenile Justice	6
Domestic Violence	7-12
Health Care	13-14
Food Assistance	15
Energy Assistance	16-17
Homelessness	18-19
Housing	20
Transportation	21
Unemployment	22
*State Budget	23-28



State to release review of Braman custody case

Friday, October 26, 2007

By John Agar

The Grand Rapids Press

STANTON -- Once reviews are complete, the state plans to release findings into why a 9-year-old boy was left in his father's custody despite the father's use of a cattle prod on two older brothers.

A Children's Protective Services worker wrote in an e-mail that Nicholas "Elmer" Braman was not at risk in his father's Stanton-area home where police found the boy, his father, Oliver Braman, and new wife, Nancy Kaczor, dead of carbon-monoxide poisoning.

Their bodies were discovered Oct. 16.

Ismael Ahmed, appointed director of the Department of Human Services in September, wants the process to be as "transparent as possible so that the public understands the actions that we take," spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet said Thursday.

The agency came under heavy criticism following the 2005 death of Ricky Holland at the hands of his adoptive parents.

In that case, the former DHS director said case workers failed to follow rules and put too much trust in the adoptive mother. Nine of 23 state workers involved in his case were reassigned.

The agency eventually released results of that internal probe, a first. Sorbet said that, while its investigations generally are not released publicly, the director "intends to release the findings at the conclusion" of the Braman investigation. No timetable was set.

The Department of Human Services' Office of Family Advocate is investigating, along with the Office of Children's Ombudsman.

Two area state senators plan to ask for hearings before the Families and Human Services Committee.

The chairman, Mark Jansen, R-Gaines Township, said he wants to know whether any policies or procedures need to be changed, and whether Montcalm County handles its cases differently than other counties.

He also wondered if an e-mail exchange -- a prosecutor said the 9-year-old boy was at risk in his father's care, a social worker disagreed -- was typical.

Oliver Braman told police in August that he used a cattle prod on sons, Oliver, 14, and Tyler, 15, to discipline them, police reports showed.

"Once that was done to them, they would get in line," a Montcalm County sheriff's deputy wrote in a report.

The boys ran away to their mother's Saginaw home on Aug. 2. They told Saginaw authorities about the abuse that led their father to plead guilty to attempted second-degree child abuse.

Police say Braman skipped a court appearance and set up the deaths. He faced a jail sentence next month.

Police believe he coerced his youngest son to write a glowing letter about his father to suggest the boy only wanted to be with his dad.

Send e-mail to the author: jagar@grpress.com

©2007 Grand Rapids Press

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **battlecreekenquirer.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Oct 26, 2007
Baby death investigation in progress
Trace Christenson
The Enquirer

SPRINGFIELD — Police are conducting interviews today as their investigation into the death last month of a 5-month-old Springfield baby continues.

Damien Lewis died Sept. 26 at a day care operated by Ruthann Jarvis.

At the time of the death, Chief Rob Coles of the Springfield Department of Public Safety said the baby was left by his parents at the day care about 40 minutes, and had been fed and put into a crib before Jarvis realized he was not breathing. Police were called at 7:07 a.m.

Police didn't find anything suspicious at the time, but now say a toxicology report following an autopsy has caused them to continue their investigation.

Springfield investigators are being assisted by Battle Creek police.

Look for the complete story Saturday in the Battle Creek Enquirer and online at battlecreekenquirer.com.



Day-care molester headed to prison

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, October 26, 2007

By Paul Janczewski

pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

A Grand Blanc Township man who told a judge he molested a young boy at his wife's day care center for his own sexual gratification was sentenced to 2-15 years in prison.

Jerry L. Anderson, 62, apologized and said he hoped the victim and his family can forgive him.

Genesee Circuit Judge Archie L. Hayman told Anderson that his molestation of children "cannot be tolerated."

"Children are our most precious resource," he said.

Anderson earlier pleaded guilty to second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a child under 13 years old.

At an earlier court hearing, a boy, 4, testified that "Papa" touched his penis.

"Papa" was what he and other children called Anderson, whose wife, Marsha Anderson, ran Nannie's House day care center, 7377 Porter Road in Grand Blanc Township.

Other witnesses included two of Anderson's daughters, who said their father told them he molested the boy and admitted to being a pedophile.

The boy's mother said she took her son to the day care center from September 2005 through April 2007, but stopped when the boy and another person told her of the inappropriate touchings.

The boy said Anderson crawled into bed with him at nap time on a number of occasions and molested him.

The mother declined to comment after the sentencing.

The day care's license was revoked in late April by the office of Children and Adult Licensing, a state bureau overseeing day care centers under the auspices of the state Department of Human Services.

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **battlecreekenquirer.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Oct 26, 2007

New testimony adds charge

Trace Christenson

The Enquirer

The Battle Creek teenager charged with shooting at a school bus last month is facing a more serious charge after a judge agreed Thursday to hear new testimony.

Devin Stewart, 16, is charged with 57 counts, now including one of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder.

If tried as an adult and convicted, Stewart faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Last week at a hearing in the Family Division of Calhoun County Circuit Court, Judge Conrad Sindt denied a prosecution motion to charge Stewart with four counts of the more serious assault charge. Instead, Sindt found by a probable cause standard that Stewart should be charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, which carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison.

But prosecutors asked to reopen the hearing and bring additional testimony to support their argument for the more serious charge.

Stewart is accused of firing several shots at the Battle Creek Public Schools bus near West Street and Garfield Avenue on Sept. 12. Twenty-six students from South Hill Academy and the bus driver were on the bus, but no one was hurt.

Last week Sindt ruled there was not enough testimony to show Stewart wanted to do more than frighten the people on the bus.

But one of the students, Dominique Sims, 16, testified Thursday that Stewart, armed with a handgun, walked to within 4- or 5-feet of the bus and threatened to kill Sims.

"He started talking to me and put the gun to the window and said 'I'll kill you,'" Sims told Assistant Prosecutor Jeff Kabot. "Then he told his friends to back up and he started shooting."

Sims said Stewart was with three other young men, and they were trading insults and gang signs with students on the bus. The yelling also had occurred the day before, Sims said.

The day of the shooting, Sims said he saw Stewart approach from around the corner of a building and yelled to others on the bus, "Devin's got a mag," meaning a gun. Police said it was a .25-caliber handgun.

Kabot argued that the verbal threat and firing several shots 18 or so inches below the windows on the bus meant Stewart was trying to do more than frighten the people on the bus and thus he should be charged with the more serious offense.

Prosecutors had charged Stewart with four counts of assault with intent to do great bodily harm but Sindt said Thursday that Sims was apparently the only one verbally threatened by Stewart and so, legally, he would be the only victim of the more serious assault.

Defense attorney Niels Magnusson argued against any reinstatement of more serious charges, arguing that the testimony that Stewart was the shooter was not credible and the gunshots were well below the bus windows.

"Where the shots were fired speaks volumes," he said.

Stewart is scheduled to undergo a psychological examination before the second half of the juvenile proceedings, called Phase II, will be heard Nov. 14 to determine if Stewart should be tried as an adult in circuit court.

He is being held in the county juvenile home.

Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

On probation, sheriff's deputy faces new stalking charges

Convicted of assault earlier, officer had knife, prosecutor says

Friday, October 26, 2007

BY SUSAN L. OPPAT

The Ann Arbor News

Less than two months after he was placed on probation, a former Washtenaw County Sheriff's deputy was charged with aggravated stalking and violating his probation.

David Glover, 39, was sentenced to 18 months of probation on Aug. 28, after pleading no contest to assault and battery, domestic violence and phone tampering. He was accused of forcing his way into his girlfriend's house last February and assaulting her.

"It's a sad day for all of us, Mr. Glover. Good luck to you," Judge Donald E. Shelton said at the August sentencing.

Police were called back to the woman's Ypsilanti Township home on Oct. 19, authorities said.

Washtenaw County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Joseph Burke told Shelton Tuesday that Glover was on the woman's porch Oct. 19. He said Glover had a knife and black gloves in his back pocket and admitted he had been drinking, in violation of his probation.

In addition to the incident in February that led to the probation term, Burke said Glover had also been convicted of malicious destruction of property for smashing a window in his girlfriend's car while she was in it.

Glover, an 11-year Sheriff's Department employee, resigned in August.

Following his arraignment this week, Glover was held on 10 percent of a \$250,000 bond on the stalking charge. He was also being held on \$25,000 cash bond in the probation violation case, pending an Oct. 30 hearing. Glover's preliminary hearing in the stalking case is set for Thursday.

Susan Oppat can be reached at soppat@annarbornews.com or 734-482-1166

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

There are alternatives to abuse Ex-victim educates others on domestic violence

Friday, October 26, 2007

News Staff Reporter

After experiencing severe physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her former husband several years ago, Brighton area resident Sharon Richmond has been able to make a new life for herself.

At her lowest point, she was certain her husband would kill her. She was the personification of the term "battered wife."

But today, especially during October, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Richmond wants women to know that there are alternatives to enduring physical, emotional and psychological abuse. She talks with others about her experiences through LACASA and she has written a humorous account of her past dating disasters, "Kissing Toads and Other Hazards of Dating," that was part of her cathartic recovery from abuse.

At the time she met her future spouse, Richmond was living in Arkansas, where she had moved from Michigan to pursue a job opportunity. Her future husband had just been released from prison after serving a sentence for armed robbery.

Normally that would be a red flag, but the idealistic Richmond didn't think so at the time. "I thought everybody deserves a second chance," she says.

The abuse began soon after they started dating, although she didn't recognize it as such. "I didn't see it as abuse - I saw it as caring, compassionate behavior," Richmond says. "He was always right by my side, wouldn't let me go anywhere by myself. (The abuse) was always there, in underlying currents. He was always pinching me and poking me."

Richmond moved back to Michigan, with her fiancé, when they became engaged.

"The obvious abuse didn't start until after we were married," Richmond says.

Dr. Joseph Bono, a Brighton psychologist, says women, who comprise the majority of domestic violence victims, need to be on the lookout for things other than the obvious signs in their partner.

"If they have a problem with an explosive temper, or have broken things, that should be a warning sign," Bono says. In addition to his Brighton practice, Bono is a consulting psychologist for Wolverine Human Services, which operates residential treatment and other programs for wayward juveniles in Michigan.

The couple got married in August 1999, and Richmond says the physical abuse started almost immediately. "I started getting shoved, he pulled my hair, started hitting. He was a hard drinker, an alcoholic. He tried to kill me on three occasions." She says he sexually assaulted her.

Richmond was ripe for abuse. "I was at a low point in my life so I was very vulnerable to his controlling behavior," she says. "He would undermine my decisions, there was a lot of manipulation right off the bat. It was a form of mind control. They convince you it was your fault. It was like, 'If you didn't say or do those things, I wouldn't have to get angry with you.'"

She says her husband would accuse her "of sleeping with everyone I knew. I was never allowed to go out, never allowed to wear makeup. He didn't want me to be attractive to other men. His jealousy was unbounded," Richmond says.

Her husband was careful about the way in which he beat her up so there were no visible marks, and he never left any broken bones.

"The last time he assaulted me I had worked a long day and was exhausted, and he told me to get him another beer, and I said no, I'm going to bed, hoping I'd live to see the next morning. He put on leather work gloves, pinned me to the bed, put his left hand around my throat, hit me across the face, squeezed until I was almost unconscious and said, 'I meant to kill you but decided not to.' It was the third time he had almost strangled me to unconsciousness. I was terrified."

It was at that point that Richmond first considered leaving.

Bono says it is imperative the victim not remain in the abusive relationship. "She needs to get help, and the first thing is to get to safety," he says. "The majority of people convicted of homicide are people who murdered a spouse or girlfriend, a lover or former lover or spouse," says Bono.

"I had never attempted to leave," Richmond says, "because he said he would hunt me down and kill me and my family." One night her husband was extremely abusive over the phone, and she decided it was then or never. "I knew if I didn't get out that night I wasn't going to live," she says.

Richmond got up the nerve to call her sister to come and pick her up.

"I was terrified he was going to come home before they got there," she says. "It was the first time I had told them of the abuse, but they had suspected it," she says. "I called LACASA and they put me in a safe house. I had 25 cents in my pocket."

Her sister and brother-in-law got the husband a one-way bus ticket out-of-state and drove him to the bus station. He has never returned.

Domestic violence cuts across the socioeconomic spectrum, but its negative effects are most acutely felt by those of lesser means.

Bono says the victim may feel trapped due to a lack of money - or the means of getting it - or job skills. "You may not have a place to stay and you have all these logistical problems," such as lack of transportation, he says.

Despite her efforts to forget the past, Richmond at times is forced to relive the bad memories, and has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Due to the intervention of LACASA, Richmond was able to get to a safe house and receive counseling and other help. She now assists at LACASA training sessions and has spoken publicly about her experiences.

Tom Tolen can be reached at ttolen@livingstoncommunitynews.com or at 810-844-2009.

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Writings about domestic violence

Friday, October 26, 2007

- Local resident Sharon Richmond has written a short book titled, "Kissing Toads and Other Hazards of Dating," published by PublishAmerica, and available locally at Barnes & Noble at Green Oak Village Place at US-23 and Lee Road and at Aria Booksellers in downtown Howell. She now is planning another book. While her first effort was a humorous account of her past dating disasters, and was intended as part of her therapy, the next one will be a much more serious account of hers and others' experiences as victims of domestic violence. "I want people to read it and be able to see through the eyes of the victim," she says.
- Dr. Joseph Bono, a Brighton psychologist, has written a help book titled "Caveat Emptor: A Consumer's Guide to Mental Health Services." It is available from www.AuthorHouse.com or by accessing Bono's Web site: www.josephbonophd.com.

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

10/26/2007

Keeping vigil

Kate Finneren-Hessling , The Huron Daily Tribune

BAD AXE — About 50 concerned residents, along with county and law enforcement officials, gathered Thursday evening outside the Huron County Building for a candlelight vigil held in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

During the vigil, Commissioner Clark Elftman read a proclamation from the Huron County Board of Commissioners declaring October 2007 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Huron County.

Thursday's vigil also honored local law enforcement for all of the work they do in the area regarding domestic violence disputes.

Huron County Prosecutor Mark Gaertner gave a brief speech, saying prevention is the key.

"Prosecution's the last resort ... it often comes too late," he said.

Huron County Sheriff Kent Tibbits also spoke during the vigil, reminding the community that there's help available.

He said victims of domestic violence can call local law enforcement, or reach out to domestic violence advocates at the Human Development Commission, or seek shelter at the county's SafePlace in Bad Axe.

Also during the vigil, there were two musical performances featuring Kari Lyn Fabyan who sang "Broken Wing" by Martina McBride and "In the Arms of the Angel," by Sarah McLachlin.

The vigil also featured a survivor's story and a moment of silence in remembrance of domestic violence victims.

The Huron County Clothesline Project was on display outside the county building this week and could be seen during the vigil.

"The actual clothesline project is T-shirts made by survivors," said Jill Collins Brown, of the Human Development Commission and Domestic

Violence Awareness Month Planning Committee. “ ... It is a vehicle for women affected by domestic violence to express their emotions by decorating a shirt.”

She said it's a nationwide project.

“We're lucky enough to have a local project (that's part of the national project),” Brown said, adding there's more information available online at www.clotheslineproject.org.

Also on display was the “Silent Witness Project,” which consists of two wooden silhouettes painted red to show each victim's blood. Brown said the two silhouettes represent two women from towns similar in size to towns in Huron County, who were victims of domestic violence.

House passes new children's health bill, but not by veto-proof margin

October 25, 2007

By CHARLES BABINGTON

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The House passed a revised children's health proposal Thursday, but not by the two-thirds margin that supporters will need if President Bush vetoes the measure as promised.

The 265-142 vote was a victory for Bush and his allies, who urged House Republicans to reject Democrats' claims that changes to the legislation had met their chief concerns. If the same vote occurs on a veto override attempt, Bush will prevail, as he did earlier this month when he vetoed a similar bill.

Advertisement

Liberal groups continue to run attack ads against Republicans siding with Bush on the issue, which many Democrats consider a winner for their party.

Democratic leaders said changes to the bill, which would add \$35 billion to the State Children's Health Insurance Program, had addressed critics' concerns about participation by adults, illegal immigrants and families able to afford health insurance. But GOP leaders called the changes insignificant and politically motivated.

The decade-old health program is aimed at families that do not qualify for Medicaid but are too poor to afford medical insurance. As with the bill Bush vetoed, the revised measure would add would \$35 billion over five years, financed by a 61-cent increase in the federal excise tax on a pack of cigarettes.

Under the revisions, the program would exclude families earning more than three times the federal poverty rate. Low-income childless adults, which some states cover, would be phased out in one year. And states would have to be more rigorous in checking the validity of applicants' Social Security numbers, an effort to exclude illegal immigrants.

House Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio, likened the revisions to "window-dressing rather than substantive changes."

However, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the legislation "has the support of the American people."

Before Thursday's vote, the White House announced that Bush would veto the revised bill because it does too little to enroll low-income families ahead of those somewhat better off, and because it would cost more than the earlier bill.

Democrats said it would cost more because it would cover more low-income children, the program's chief goal.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071025/NEWS07/71025066/1008/NEWS06>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Friday, October 26, 2007

Detroit News Letter

Give more vulnerable kids a healthy start

Oct. 18 was a sad day indeed for the children of Michigan and our entire nation, when politics took precedence over children's health.

Despite bipartisan congressional support, overwhelming public support and the backing of a broad coalition of advocates, insurers, medical providers and others, a common-sense proposal to ensure the health and futures of 10 million children, including 110,000 in Michigan, fell 13 votes short of overriding the president's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

We applaud Michigan's congressional members who voted for the override: U.S. Reps. John Conyers, John Dingell, Vern Ehlers, Dale Kildee, Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, Sander Levin, Candace Miller, Bart Stupak and Fred Upton. And we are grateful for the leadership shown by U.S. Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow on this issue.

As we move to forge a new bill, we encourage our leaders to put aside the myths and misinformation that have been spread about this popular and wildly successful program and focus on the children.

While we understand some modifications will be made to the bill, we stand firm in our belief that no child should lose coverage and that coverage must be funded for the 4 million children who are eligible but unenrolled.

This will require a funding increase of \$35 billion over five years. Is it unreasonable to ask of the world's richest nation that we give our vulnerable children a healthy start in life?

We fervently hope the Michigan members who voted against this legislation will reconsider their positions and vow to make children, not politics, the priority.

Sharon Claytor Peters

President & CEO

of Michigan's Children, Lansing



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Pinckney theater students to trick-or-treat for Food Gatherers

Friday, October 26, 2007

Members of Pinckney Community High School's Act2 Theatre Company will participate in "Trick or Treat So Kids Can Eat" Wednesday from 6 to 9 p.m.

Instead of going door-to-door on Halloween for candy, students will don costumes and collect nonperishable food items for Food Gatherers, which supports Gleaners Community Food Bank of Livingston.

"Trick or Treat So Kids Can Eat" is a national community service program for schools that are members of the International Thespian Society, a division of the Educational Theatre Association. Details: Pinckney High drama teacher Rob Roy, 810-225-5721.

Trick-or-treating hours Wednesday throughout Livingston County are 6 to 8 p.m.

From News staff reports

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



Utility bill rules have changed

October 26, 2007

BY ALEJANDRO BODIPO-MEMBA

FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

The Michigan Public Service Commission said it has formally adopted revised rules governing Consumer Standards and Billing Practices for electric and natural gas residential service.

“The new rules adopted today substantially help customers by providing more shut-off protections, prohibiting estimated meter reading in most cases, and giving customers more time to pay their bills,” said MPSC Chairman Orjiakor Isiogu, in a statement.

Advertisement

Officials at the MPSC said the changes include changing the space-heating season for winter protection from Dec. 1 through March 31 to Nov. 1 to March 31; allowing utilities to create an expanded Winter Protection Program to serve customers above 150% of the federal poverty level; and allowing companies to extend shutoff protect programs throughout the entire year for low-income families.

The MPSC said payment periods have been extended from 17 days to 21 days. In addition, estimated bills are to be issued only if the utility cannot gain access to the meter and has exhausted all reasonable alternatives to obtain an actual read.

For more information on the changes, go to www.michigan.gov/mpsc.

Contact **ALEJANDRO BODIPO-MEMBA** at 313-222-5008 or abodipo@freepress.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071026/BUSINESS06/71026021/1001/NEWS>



Volunteers to help seal up drafts

Friday, October 26, 2007

childreth@citpat.com -- 768-4924

Many community nonprofits, churches and social service agencies provide utility-bill assistance for needy families with high heat or electric bills. This Saturday, a hoard of volunteers is going to tackle the root of the problem -- drafty houses.

Volunteers from nine community churches will head to more than 80 area homes to install weather stripping, caulk windows and seal outlets.

"We're just trying to keep the heat cost down," said Rod Mathews, director of community service for Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church.

Mathews said he expects between 40 and 50 volunteers to show up, and the group should be able to winterize at least 22 homes.

The United Way of Jackson County organized the day. The Spring Arbor church has been winterizing homes for about three years, but wanted to expand the effort.

"Our church can do many (houses), but more churches can do more," Mathews said.

Bethany Timmons, the United Way coordinator who oversaw that agency's part of the project, said winterizing the houses will cost between \$5,000-\$6,000. Most of the money is donated from the participating churches. The United Way partnered with Community Action Agency, which has a more comprehensive weatherization program for low-income families, to make sure they have the correct supplies and training for volunteers.

Mathews said many of the families the program helps are low-income, but there is no formal income guidelines. Anyone whose house needs winterization is eligible for the program.

Mathews said several volunteers go out to survey the houses before the teams come.

"We'll take a look inside, measure some windows," he said. "If a home doesn't need assistance, then we'll say we can't help. But there's very few we haven't been able to help."

©2007 Jackson Citizen Patriot

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

10/26/2007 10:30:00 AM

[Email this article](#) • [Print this article](#)

Homeless plight spills into schools

Lori Hansen
Correspondent

GREENVILLE - Most of us have seen pictures of homeless people wandering around large cities, sleeping on park benches and toting all their belongings along with them.

Yet thanks to recent plant closing and layoffs, even in the rural communities around Montcalm and Ionia counties there are lots of children who are homeless.



Lakeview Community Schools Director of Instruction Sara Shriver sorts school supplies donated by members of the Brockway Wesleyan Church in Morley for homeless children attending the Lakeview district.

"We are always finding (homeless) kids," said Lakeview Community Schools Director of Instruction Sara Shriver. "It is year-round."

She said 50 different students have been officially identified as homeless in the Lakeview district. That number includes 11 during the current school year with nine more cases still pending.

Other area districts are experiencing the same.

"They are coming in left and right," said Linda VanHouten, director of student services with the Greenville Public Schools. "We are seeing so much more this year."

The Greenville district currently has 15 homeless students, although VanHouten said that number fluctuates daily.

"We had 25 homeless students at the end of last year. We already have 15 and this is only September," she said. "I am getting calls daily. It is a reflection of what is going on in our community."

VanHouten said when the weather gets colder the number of homeless children will increase.

Susan Koster, homeless student liaison with the Central Montcalm Public School, said that district currently has two homeless families with students.

What do the districts do for the homeless youngsters?

"We do whatever we can to help maintain the child staying at their home school rather than leaving, enrolling in another school and then re-enrolling later," Koster said.

Free breakfasts and lunches are provided for homeless students at Central Montcalm. Several individuals and businesses have provided backpacks and school supplies for homeless students there, said Koster.

The same holds true for homeless students in Lakeview. (See accompanying story.)

"We also have a clothing bank at the UE (Central Montcalm Upper Elementary School), not just for homeless students but for others we think might benefit," Koster said. "We provide whatever we can for the kids to come to school without interruption in their educational process."

"We do whatever it takes for them to graduate," said VanHouten. "We provide free and reduced

lunches, and transportation to get them to the school they are currently attending to maintain continuity. I have purchased clothing, graduation gowns and paid money for a student to attend their senior trip as well as little things that may be elusive for the student."

The area school officials agree that still more can be done, however.

"We need to create an awareness for these students and be looking for families who have kids in need," Shriver said.

"By the time they ask for help, the needs are especially overwhelming," said VanHouten. "These kids just want a place where they belong."

Correspondent Lori Hansen is a Greenville-area resident.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Home help available Group will do repairs for the needy

Friday, October 26, 2007

BY LISA CAROLIN

News Staff Reporter

Elderly, disabled and financially challenged residents of Livingston County have a new option when it comes to home repair.

It's called Labor of Love, and it's a new ministry affiliated with Love In The Name of Christ.

Labor of Love is hoping to incorporate with many of the 31 local partner churches that are part of Love INC.

The Labor of Love ministry is an outgrowth of a ministry begun at Shepherd of the Lakes Church. The church has run a project day for the last three years on a spring Saturday.

Projects include building handicap ramps; repairing roofing, siding and flooring; installing new kitchens, painting, plumbing and electrical repairs; cleaning and yard work, and safety inspections for smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and more.

"The plan is to build the Labor of Love program to include ongoing services for emergency repairs," says Katherine Janego, executive director of Love INC. "For this program, we ask that volunteers agree to provide only one day of repair services each year when it is convenient to their schedule."

Janego says the need for the service is great because elderly, disabled and poor people often cannot effectively maintain their homes.

"Their homes are their primary source of security and independence," says Janego. "While we live in an affluent area, there are many that need this assistance."

Janego says volunteers are invited from all of the Love INC partner churches to become involved in Labor of Love.

Love INC, which started out as a coalition of seven churches in Livingston County in 2005, is now celebrating its second anniversary and helps more than 75 residents every month.

Love INC is a clearinghouse where volunteers receive phone calls from people in the community with needs that range from needing help paying rent to needing help repairing a car. For information, call 810-494-4059.

Lisa Carolin can be reached at lc Carolin@livingstoncommunitynews.com or at 810-844-2010.

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

Help needy workers get bus rides to their jobs

October 26, 2007

One in four households in Detroit doesn't have a car and must rely on the region's inadequate bus system to get to jobs -- often in the far-flung suburbs. For many of these workers, earning at or near the minimum wage, \$49 a month for a bus pass is another barrier to employment.

That's why, over the next three weeks, Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit is raising money for the transportation needs of the thousands of low-income workers the agency serves, as well as promoting awareness about the problems they face.

Advertisement

Its Get on the Bus campaign seeks to raise \$300,000 to provide six months of bus tickets for about 1,000 people, said Russ Russell, vice president of Goodwill Industries. That would enable the agency, over the next year, to double the number of people it places in long-term employment.

More people like Barbara Young, 42, of Detroit, could hold jobs. Young received a Goodwill transportation subsidy for six months, while she worked at a minimum-wage job in Westland and traveled two hours each way on the bus. Help with bus fares kept her working until she found a better-paying job a month ago as an equipment operator at a Detroit warehouse.

Transportation is vital to any employment program, especially in metro Detroit. With government assistance cutting back at all levels, more help must come from the private sector.

Detroit needs more success stories like Young's, and Goodwill's Get on the Bus campaign is a good way to create them.

On the net: giveabuspass.org or call 866-593-9675.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071026/OPINION01/710260331/1068/OPINION>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Muskegon Chronicle

Jobless rates continue to inch up

Friday, October 26, 2007

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Troublesomely high unemployment continued to inch up throughout West Michigan, with Muskegon County's jobless rate reaching 7.3 percent in September.

Meanwhile, Ottawa County's September seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate reached 5.6 percent, Oceana County 6.6 percent, Newaygo County 7.4 percent and Mason County 6.5 percent.

In each case, jobless rates in September were higher than in August. And in all counties but Mason, the unemployment rate was higher than a year ago.

West Michigan is reflecting the high unemployment picture found across the state. Michigan's seasonally adjusted jobless rate in September was 7.5 percent, highest in the nation.

As an example, Muskegon County's 7.3 percent unemployment in September compared to 7.1 percent in August and 6.6 percent a year ago.

In Ottawa County, overall jobs were up 1,800 in September but the goods-producing sector lost 300.

©2007 Muskegon Chronicle

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

WHAT TO CUT? MICHIGAN'S BUDGET CRISIS

Medicaid deal reached; other battles remain

Governor balks at grants for private college tuition

October 26, 2007

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF

FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU CHIEF

LANSING -- An estimated 60,000 people -- 19- and 20-year-olds and caretakers for poor children -- would keep their Medicaid eligibility under a tentative deal Thursday to solve one of the thorniest issues facing negotiators in finalizing Michigan's budget before Nov. 1.

But even as Leslie Fritz, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jennifer Granholm, announced the breakthrough, legislators were chafing at the latest wrinkle, Granholm's announcement that she would veto \$56 million in scholarship aid of up to \$2,100 a year to 40,000 students at Michigan's private colleges. The Tuition Grant Program has long been a sore spot for Granholm, but lawmakers, including some Democrats, have fiercely defended it.

Advertisement

The \$56 million in private school scholarships would more than make up for the \$50 million cost of continuing coverage for the young people and caregivers as lawmakers work to erase a \$435-million deficit.

Despite the new glitch, a final budget deal could be sealed by Tuesday, said Matt Marsden, spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, R-Rochester.

"A number of major hurdles were cleared today," Marsden said, after Bishop met with House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township, and state budget director Bob Emerson.

Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, said he thought the private tuition money would be kept as part of the Oct. 1 agreement that raised the state income tax, imposed the 6% sales tax on some services and extended last year's budget through Oct. 31.

"We had every reason to believe that was part of the agreement," said Stamas, chairman of the Senate subcommittee that sets spending for colleges and universities. "It's a program that has bipartisan support in the House and the Senate."

He said cutting the tuition aid this fiscal year would financially strap private college students who began the school year assuming they would receive the aid.

Fritz, spokeswoman for the state budget office, said Granholm never agreed to the tuition grants. "It had not been a part of discussions prior to today," Fritz said Thursday. "She has not included it in her budget recommendation. As far as I know, that is still her position."

Senate Republicans have said they would not agree to any department budgets until all were agreed to as a package deal. Conference committees on several budgets were put on hold Wednesday and Thursday, as talks continued privately to iron out differences.

Among the sticking points are higher hunting and fishing license fees and privatization of foster care and juvenile rehabilitation programs.

Hunter and fisherman Bill Edwards, 68, of Grosse Pointe Farms would pay the biggest increase as a senior license holder, but he thinks it's necessary.

"If they can keep the conservation officers and continue to give us access to the public land we use, it's well worth it," said Edwards, who hunts grouse, pheasants and ducks and fishes for trout.

"You're going to get some people moaning that they won't (take part) anymore, but you know what? The real hunters are going to keep hunting, and the real fishermen will keep fishing."

But Allan Taylor, 46, of Monroe, who hunts deer during the firearms season and fishes for walleye and perch on Lake Erie, doesn't think the Department of Natural Resources deserves the increases. "The deer hunting where I go" in Montmorency County "is nowhere near as good as it was 10 years ago," he said. "The DNR deliberately brought the numbers way down, so now we're lucky to see five deer in a week where we used to see 50."

As for the threat of laying off conservation officers, Taylor said, "if they have to, they have to. Welcome to the real world. I know a bunch of people who got laid off at Chrysler, and I don't see the politicians rushing to guarantee them jobs."

The Medicaid issue had threatened to block a final agreement. Republicans proposed cutting Medicaid coverage for eligible 19- and 20-year-olds, and child caretakers, such as grandparents who play the role of parents -- cuts Granholm opposes.

They would save nearly \$50 million. At any time, about 16,000 19- and 20-year-olds receive Medicaid, as do 42,000 caretaker relatives, according to the Department of Community Health.

Cutting young adults from Medicaid would eventually cost the state's health care system more money, said Herbert Smitherman Jr., an assistant dean at Wayne State University's medical school.

Smitherman said without Medicaid, those clients would put off regular health care and wind up in more costly emergency rooms, which costs hospitals and private insurers.

He said the Wayne State clinic treats about 30,000 people a year, and more than half are covered by Medicaid. He said one-third of Detroit's population receives Medicaid, which mostly pays for treating elderly, blind and disabled people, as well as low-income children.

"You're talking about a predominately vulnerable population," Smitherman said.

It was unclear whether the tentative Medicaid deal includes reductions in payments to doctors and hospitals or higher co-pays for Medicaid recipients.

Smitherman said cutting payments to medical providers would increase the financial burden on hospitals and result in even fewer people getting care.

Contact **CHRIS CHRISTOFF** at 517-372-8660. Staff writers Eric Sharp, Dawson Bell and Patricia Anstett contributed to this report.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?Dato=20071026&Kategori=NEWS06&Lopenr=710260316&Ref=AR>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Friday, October 26, 2007

Lansing makes budget headway

Deal reached on aid to schools, Medicaid, prisons, colleges; extra funding for DIA, zoo iffy.

Mark Hornbeck and Gary Heinlein / Detroit News Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- Spending pacts apparently have been struck on school aid, Medicaid spending, prisons and higher education, but it appeared increasingly likely Thursday that state budget talks will go right up to the midnight Halloween deadline.

Sources familiar with closed-door negotiations reported advances Thursday, but no final deal on the outstanding sticking points, including privatizing foster care, slicing money from disease prevention programs and raising hunting and fishing license fees. The governor's office, the Democratic state House and the Republican Senate must agree to an additional \$430 million in cuts to balance the state's books and avoid another partial shutdown of government services.

On the bubble and probably not to be included in the new spending plan are proposed one-time appropriations for three key Detroit arts and cultural institutions: \$12 million for the Detroit Zoo, \$10 million for the Detroit Institute of Arts and \$1.9 million for the Detroit Historical Museum. The spending was to help ease the transition from city operation to oversight by nonprofit groups. The funding was proposed as an addition to the History, Arts and Libraries budget by House Democrats. Lawmakers said they still may find the money to fund the transition later in the year.

None of the 18 bills comprising the 2008 fiscal year budget that started Oct. 1 has cleared both houses of the Legislature, or even emerged from joint House-Senate committees that are to hammer out final agreements. Scheduled conference committee meetings were postponed another day because Senate Republicans have decided not to participate until a comprehensive agreement is reached on state spending and cuts.

Progress behind closed doors

Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, R-Rochester, said through a spokesman that much was accomplished behind the scenes Thursday.

"We made some good solid progress on every aspect of the budget, including community health and human services," said Matt Marsden, Bishop's aide. "As long as things keep progressing, the majority leader says we should be in a good position to pass the budget bills no later than Tuesday."

The House was scheduled to be in session today, but the Senate will not reconvene until Monday. Marsden said senators, meeting in small groups, will be at the Capitol hammering out budget legislation throughout the weekend.

Leslee Fritz, spokeswoman for state Budget Director Bob Emerson, agreed that progress was made Thursday.

"A number of issues that were outstanding are closer," Fritz said. "In some cases, agreements were reached, but some minor details remain unresolved."

She said it's unclear whether conference committees will meet today.

Also Thursday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm's long-standing proposal to eliminate \$58.7 million in tuition grants for private college students reemerged.

Five times, Granholm has proposed eliminating private college tuition assistance, but she's been rebuffed by the Legislature each time. The program provides up to \$2,100 for tuition for some 40,000 students.

"This program has been and is strongly supported by the Legislature on a bipartisan basis and it's absolutely critical, needs-based financial aid for students," said Ed Blews, president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan.

Blews said he was "surprised and disappointed" the tuition grants are back on the table and may be sacrificed, since the program was not included in a list of cuts drawn up by the governor and lawmakers as part of the budget-balancing package when they passed tax increases on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.

Parks programs face deficit

Both sides Thursday reported accord on Medicaid health care funding that would not eliminate programs for 19- and 20-year-olds or caretaker relatives, as had been previously proposed by Republicans. But Republicans pushed for scaling back the Healthy Michigan Fund, a \$42 million pot for disease prevention, smoking cessation and other programs.

"We're deeply troubled by that," said Susan Schechter, director of advocacy for the American Lung Association of Michigan. She said the Centers for Disease Control recommends Michigan spend \$121 million a year on smoking prevention programs and it spends only \$3.6 million. "And now even that meager sum is threatened," she said.

A dispute remains over proposed hikes in hunting and fishing license fees. There's also a "looming" \$5.5 million deficit in the parks and recreation programs of the Department of Natural Resources "and we have no way to close that at present," said Ron Olson, director of that division.

DNR Director Rebecca Humphries has outlined cuts that would include the loss of 14 conservation officers, a dramatic reduction in fish stocking in the Great Lakes, and closure of state parks and campgrounds. In 2009, the cutbacks could include 37 of the state's 98 state parks.

The fee hikes would bump the cost of a fishing license from \$28 to \$31 in 2008 and gradually to \$44 by 2013. A deer hunting license would increase from \$15 to \$18.75 in 2008 and to \$33 by 2013.

"We recognize the DNR is forced to make cutbacks," said Michigan United Conservation Clubs Executive Director Dennis

Muchmore. "However, many of the proposed cuts eliminate some of the most important conservation and protection programs." Republicans continue to press for privatizing foster care services. Private agencies now provide 39 percent of foster care, according to the Senate Fiscal Agency. Advocates of privatization say it may save money and improve services. Detractors note the Senate Fiscal Agency reported there are no guaranteed savings and they say privatization would come at the cost of state oversight.

Democrats reported that the unresolved issue is not *whether* to privatize, but how *much* to privatize.

An apparent agreement on school aid would increase spending per student by \$96, to \$7,204 for the lowest spending school districts, and by \$48 for the highest spending districts. Overall, public schools would get a 1 percent increase. The same goes for the 15 public universities.

Prison spending would be trimmed by \$80 million including the closing of three prisons and a camp. Those closures are already under way. Some 500 inmates who have served their minimum sentences would be released on parole and put on a tether program. Also, a program that allows communities to use prison labor on public works projects would be scratched.

You can reach Mark Hornbeck at (313) 222-2470 or mhornbeck@detnews.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071026/POLITICS/710260375>



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published October 25, 2007

Related news from the Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Healthcare Law](#)
- [Family](#)
- [US News](#)
- [Law](#)
- [Kids](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

As budget deal nears, state departments brace for fallout

Evening update

Tim Martin
Associated Press

As Michigan lawmakers work toward an agreement on a new spending plan, some state departments already are planning temporary layoffs and other cutbacks to make ends meet.

About \$430 million in cuts and spending limitations are needed to balance the new spending plan set to take effect Nov. 1.

The state attorney general's office, for example, has planned three temporary, unpaid layoff days around Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day to help deal with what it expects could be a \$2 million reduction. Employees said they'd rather have everyone take layoff days than have to cut more staff, as happened earlier this year.

Other state departments are bracing themselves for possible cuts in their allocations. The Department of Natural Resources might eliminate 79 jobs, close two more state forest campgrounds and close down some state pathways and cross-country ski trails.

Wednesday deadline

Lawmakers have until next Wednesday to agree on a new spending plan, or risk a repeat of the partial government shutdown that struck in the early hours of Oct. 1. The state is operating under a 30-day extension of the past spending plan.

Both Republicans and Democrats said today that progress is being made in budget talks. The Democrat-controlled House is scheduled to meet on Friday, while the Republican-led Senate is set to return to session on Monday. A few lawmakers from both chambers will continue working on specific department level proposals over the weekend.

Cuts or scrapped spending increases will still be needed despite a higher income tax rate and an expanded sales tax on some services that will raise an estimated \$1.3 billion.

It appeared today that members of the House and Senate were close to agreement on a Department of Community Health budget that would preserve Medicaid coverage for 19- and 20-year-olds and some relative caregivers of children who are eligible for the program. Reimbursement rates to doctors and hospitals also would hold steady under the deal.

It wasn't clear where else the health department's budget might be scaled back in exchange for preserving Medicaid, however.

Grants for private college

One place where lawmakers appear to be having trouble involves \$57 million in tuition grants for private college students. The Legislature wants to preserve those grants, but there's some question over whether Gov. Jennifer Granholm will go along.

"Kids have already started this fall with that expectation" that they'll get the financial aid, said Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland. "I think we have to make sure we uphold that commitment."

Granholm has tried to cut the money in earlier budget proposals, but hasn't said if she would veto it this year. Leslee Fritz, a spokeswoman for Granholm's budget office, said the tuition grants "remain a topic of conversation."

Another unresolved issue is whether more of the state's foster care, adoption and juvenile justice systems should be turned over to private organizations.

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)